

HOW AMERICANS FARM IN CANADA

Frank Carpenter's Pen Pictures
From the Dominion's New
Wheat Belt.

BREAKING THE PRAIRIE LAND

How Seeding and Threshing Are
Done—Contract Labor and
Big Wages.

By Frank G. Carpenter.

(Special Correspondence of The Times-Dispatch.)

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BATTLEFORD, SASKATCHEWAN, January 1.—I want to tell you how Americans farm in Canada. There are some things like 150,000 ex-United States citizens in this British northwest, and 60,000 came here last year. All own farms, and most of them are the prize farmers of their communities. They have been cultivating similar lands in Minnesota and the Dakotas, and have brought their farm machinery and household effects with them. They have imported their own horses and they began breaking the prairie the moment they landed. By way of illustration, one American, who came in last spring, arrived at Saskatoon, more than 200 miles north of the American boundary, at 10 o'clock one morning. The cars had hardly stopped before he was jerking his stuff out, and by 2 that afternoon he had three plows at work breaking the prairie. In the early spring, when the earth has been softened by the winter snows, as soon as the frost is out the plows are started, and they are kept busy until the crop is in.

The breaking is done by the farmers who own the land and by contractors, who make a business of preparing the land for outsiders, and who, later on, when the plowing has been completed, they use a gang plow and from three to a half dozen horses. With three horses he is able to plow about two acres per day, and with additional horses more in proportion. Much of the work is performed by traction engines, which haul machinery and plow. They turn over a strip of sod as wide as the average city sidewalk at one time. These plows will make nine furrows in crossing the field, and will break up as much as forty acres in one day. Such work is done by contract, the contractor charging \$3.50 per acre for doing the plowing.

The next process is back setting, that is going over the field again and throwing the furrows in the opposite direction. This may also be done by contract, the total price for plowing, back setting and seeding being \$5. This means that a man can have his wheat planted in fields reduced from the virgin prairie at \$5 per acre and the seed. Others plow the land in the spring and back-set it in the summer, seeding it during the following spring. This process insures a good crop. Those who plant immediately upon breaking do not expect to get much the first year. Others plant flax for their first crop and wheat the next year.

Sowing the Wheat.

The old picture of the farmer going over the plowed ground sowing the grain broadcast is not to be seen in Canada. All grain here is planted with drills. The ordinary drill is pulled by three horses, and on the larger farms several drills follow one another over the fields. The drill plants the seed and covers it, and after this the farmer lays off until the harvest.

He may now break up or back-set other lands for the next year, or may build his house, make fences or undertake other general farm improvements.

Harvest in Canada.

The most strenuous time of the year comes with the harvest. This is a land of short seasons. The crop grows faster than in the United States and harvest comes on all at once.

About about the 15th of August those prairies become golden seas, which rise and fall under every wind. Each sea is composed of grain ready for cutting and all is ripe at just about the same time.

The farmers now go into their work with a rush. In many cases the women and girls join the men and boys in the fields. Nearly every man has his own harvesting machinery and the girls often drive the harvesters to cut the grain. Each harvester is drawn by three horses, but the husky wheat-fed American mules and managers such a team without trouble. At the same time thousands of hands have been imported from the United States and Eastern Canada. They have received reduced fares from the railroads and are sure of work at high wages from now on until the grain has

been loaded upon the cars which will take it to the great lakes.

How One American Reaps.

Harvesting on the larger farms is pushed from sunrise to dark, and even by twilight and moonlight. Thousands of bushels of grain must be reaped within a week or so and a little delay may ruin the crop. The grain must be cut when it is just so ripe, and no ripier, if left too long it will mull in the harvesting. If it becomes wet it will lose in quality, and an untimely frost may ruin it. Take for instance, a farm like that of Emilio J. Mellicke, which had last year one wheat field containing 800 acres, from which came 50,000 bushels of grain worth \$20,000 and more. That farm is situated near Dundurn in Saskatchewan several hundred miles north of the American boundary. It is owned by a Minnesota State senator, who probably got his experience in the United States. The moment his wheat was ripe he started a dozen harvesters into it, and worked his machines from daybreak to dark until every stalk was cut. He had relay horses, and he instructed his men to push them to their utmost. There was no stopping for resting at the end of the field, but every four hours fresh teams were put into the harvesters and the work went on, the machines following each other over this vast tract, cutting down scores of acres at one swath. The result was that the wheat was all harvested in time, and it brought excellent prices.

Among the Threshers.

I have seen considerable threshing during my trip through Canada. The work is done by steam, and in riding through the country last fall one was seldom out of sight of the smoke and the noise of the threshing machine.

The business is interesting. Let us visit a farm and see how it is done. The field which we enter contains a thousand acres. It is sowed with wheat shocks, or stocks, as they are called here. Each stock consists of a half dozen or more sheaves, stood upon end, with others on top so arranged as to shed the rain. In this form the stocks

have a storage capacity of 10,000,000 bushels. This is outside the great elevators at Port William and Port Arthur, at the head of Lake Superior, which will hold something like 3,000,000 bushels more.

These elevators are largely owned by companies which buy, ship and store wheat. One company will own thirty or forty elevators located at different points, and its agents will make summer and winter rates of storage and sale. The number of elevators is rapidly increasing. It has doubled within the past five years, and new buildings are going up every day. All these elevators are under government supervision. Each has a license, and it is inspected regularly by the warehouse commissioner. Every bit of grain which is sold in Canada has to pass through such inspection. It must be weighed under the government weighing master, and all grain put into vessels has to be passed upon by the government. This is to maintain the high standard of western Canadian wheat.

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have a storage capacity of 10,000,000 bushels. This is outside the great elevators at Port William and Port Arthur, at the head of Lake Superior, which will hold something like 3,000,000 bushels more.

These elevators are largely owned by companies which buy, ship and store wheat. One company will own thirty or forty elevators located at different points, and its agents will make summer and winter rates of storage and sale. The number of elevators is rapidly increasing. It has doubled within the past five years, and new buildings are going up every day. All these elevators are under government supervision. Each has a license, and it is inspected regularly by the warehouse commissioner. Every bit of grain which is sold in Canada has to pass through such inspection. It must be weighed under the government weighing master, and all grain put into vessels has to be passed upon by the government. This is to maintain the high standard of western Canadian wheat.

These elevator companies will hold the farmer's wheat and sell it as he orders, or they will agree to handle it on commission and get what they think is